

with a shared cigarette by abyssjinnie

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Summary:

this is fluffy fluff semi-set in 2x02 with a flashback to when they were teens

with a shared cigarette

"I think he's right..." Hopper is staring across the kitchen at nothing in particular, cigarette burning between his fingers. "About trauma. And we're coming up on a year, you know. I think everybody's on edge. Me... you... Will most of all. I think we just gotta get through," Hopper finally makes brief eye contact with her, clearly bothered by this whole situation as well, "the next few weeks." He looks away with a sigh while Joyce stares at him, her breaths coming shakily in and out. "Nothing's ever going to go back to the way that it was..."

He looks over at Joyce, thinking of his own trauma with the loss of his daughter. "Not really. But it'll get better. In time."

Joyce looks uncertain if she can believe that. She turns away to reach for her pack of cigarettes, finding it empty and sighs out, "Oh, give me a break..."

Hopper hands over his unfiltered cigarette, "Here."

"Thank you." Joyce puts the cigarette to her lips and coughs almost immediately after breathing in some of the smoke.

Hopper smiles like he knew this would happen.

Joyce half laughs, half coughs out, "Jesus, Hopper..." while picking off loose pieces of tobacco from her lips.

"Brings me back to old times." His smile is wide, clearly amused with himself.

"What?"

"Well, sharing my cigarettes between--"

Joyce interrupts him to finish his sentence. "Fifth and sixth period."

Hopper smiles even wider, glad that Joyce is actually smiling despite everything. "Yeah, under the steps. Mr. Cooper caught us that time, remember? He was like," Hopper changes his voice to mock their old teacher. "Hey, assholes."

Joyce's eyes widen as she speaks, "We ran! We just ran." She chuckles softly while the two of them stare at each other for a few beats. The way he looks at her is nearly identical to the way he used to look at her when they were teens.

Jim was waiting for Joyce in their usual spot under the stairs. That short five minutes between fifth and sixth period was often the highlight of his day. That was usually when being at school started to feel unbearable, but her bright smile never failed to lift his spirits and get him through the rest of the day.

By the time Joyce joined him under the stairs, he had already lit a cigarette for the two of them to share. The moment he saw her, he instantly straightened up and smiled at her. "Hey Joyce!" She smiled back at him and greeted him with a kiss on the cheek. "Hey there, Hop." With the smile never leaving her lips, she plucked the cigarette from him and took a drag, immediately coughing. "I wish you'd stop buying unfiltered!"

He took the cigarette back from her with a shrug of his shoulders. "Oh come on, they're not *that* bad!" He shook his head briefly before taking a deep drag like he had to prove they're not that bad but ending up coughing a few times himself. "Okay...maybe they are pretty bad." But they made him feel like James Dean so he wasn't planning on switching anytime soon.

Jim was handing the cigarette back to her when Mr. Cooper shuffled around the corner and caught them red handed. Jim threw the cigarette down on the ground and quickly stomped it out before grabbing Joyce's hand and yelling, "Run!" The two of them ran down the hallway with Mr. Cooper calling out, "Hey assholes!" After a minute or so of running, they reached the doors that led to the parking lot and ran outside.

Once the doors were closed they hunched over with laughter. Joyce gave his shoulder a gentle shove and could barely speak through her laughter, "I can't believe we were almost caught!"

Jim wiped away a tear from laughing so much before putting his hands on his hips and attempting to cool his laughter, “We *were* caught! Mr. Cooper just can’t run as fast as us.” He took her hand again, “Come on. Let’s go out to my truck. I’m sure he’ll be here any minute.” They were already in trouble, so why not skip the rest of the day?

They let their hands swing between them as they made their way to his truck. “You’re a bad influence on me, Hop.”

“Maybe so, but you’re the one keeping me around.”

“Yeah, *because* you’re a bad influence! I couldn’t get rid of you even if I wanted to.” She bumped her shoulder into his arm then.

“I’m not sure that’s how it works, Joyce.”

Joyce rolled her eyes at him then and let go of his hand to get in the passenger side of his truck. Jim joined her in the truck and was already lighting up a new cigarette since they had to leave the other behind.

He took a drag of the cigarette before handing it to Joyce. She scooted closer to him as she took it so she could rest her head on his shoulder. “I can’t believe we just ran away. I’m pretty sure we’re both going to get suspended.”

Jim shrugged his shoulders and laughed, “Who cares? We graduate in a few months anyway and it’s not like we were doing something illegal.”

She laughed and shook her head, “See? You’re a bad influence.”

The moment only lasts for a short time, before Joyce can’t keep it up the brief amount of happiness from reminiscing her youth with Hopper. “God, I want this to be over.”

“I know. ”

